



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 23 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
23 AUGUST 1968

LATE ITEMS

Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

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Israel-Jordan

A small Israeli force struck Jordan in the area south of the Dead Sea early this morning. The area, near Petra, has been the scene of previous Israeli attacks against Arab terrorist bases. This new blow will increase sympathy for the terrorists and further undermine King Husayn's position.

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1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

The Soviets have not yet wrung acknowledgment of their authority from the Czechoslovak people. So far, the Czechs have refrained from large-scale violence against their occupiers, but in other ways they are manifesting their refusal to knuckle under.

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The Soviets have not felt able to announce the formation of a new, "trustworthy" government, apparently estimating that the imposition of a narrowly-based regime would provoke active resistance.

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A special congress of the Czech Communist Party has called for an unlimited general strike, to start today, unless the Soviets begin talks on a withdrawal of forces and the release of arrested leaders.

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2. Rumania -
Soviet Union

Rumanian Embassy officials in Bonn and Washington have expressed fears of a possible Soviet invasion of their country. Ceausescu is reported to have announced yesterday that "we are now in a state of full mobilization." The previous day he announced the establishment of "armed guards of workers, peasants, and intellectuals" to defend national independence.

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3. Soviet Union

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4. South Vietnam

Beginning with Tet, major Communist offensives have had serious and lasting effects on the economy

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Recession in the cities stems from a widespread undermining of business and consumer confidence. Afraid and uncertain, people just are not buying.

Rural incomes are declining because of the difficulty and cost of getting through to markets, particularly Saigon. For example, rice production in the Delta is up, but deliveries to Saigon are well below what they were at this time last year. There also has been a sharp drop in the price farmers are getting for their products.

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5. Turkey

Some of the anti-US Turkish press has begun carping about the projected US Navy courtesy call at Izmir, scheduled for 27 August - 9 September. Turkish authorities appear determined to maintain order and avoid a repetition of the kind of attacks made last month by leftists on US Navy personnel in Istanbul.

6. Southern Yemen

The return from exile of left-wing leaders may presage a new orientation of the National Liberation Front government. The left-wing party leaders fled the country last spring after they failed to impose their policies. The following months of "moderation," however, did not pay off for the government in air support from Yemen or Egypt, or pilots from the Soviet Union. If the regime does turn left, it may be courting trouble again with the conservative army.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

More on Flooding: A Western traveler to Hanoi reports indications of considerable flooding around the North Vietnamese capital. He says the road between the city and Gia Lam airport is impassable because of flooding, and residents have mentioned deaths and damage caused by rising waters. The source noted increased helicopter activity, doubtless connected with flood relief work. He said that the International Control Commission flight from Laos was unable to land at Gia Lam last Friday because of the flooding. This latter point is confirmed by recent communications intercepts which show that aircraft have been hastily evacuated from Gia Lam by helicopter and that use of the air base has been sharply curtailed. The ICC flight has been unable to land in its last three attempts, undoubtedly because of flood problems.

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Hanoi Interest in Czechoslovakia: The North Vietnamese want to keep their toes on the latest Soviet line about Czechoslovakia.

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More MIG-21s: Analysis of photography taken on 26 July shows three more MIG-21 jet fighters in North Vietnam. Camouflaged and dispersed near Phuc Yen airfield, these additional aircraft bring the MIG-21 count in the country to at least 28 first-line fighters. Three additional MIG-21s are there, but their operating condition appears questionable.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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